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DEPT FOR DS/IP/NEA, DS/IP/ITA, DS/ICI/PII, S/CT, NEA/EX,
NEA/ARP, SES-O, DS COMMAND CENTER, M

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/17/2018

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: 9/17 SANAA EAC REQUESTS AUTHORIZED DEPARTURE

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche, reason 1.4 (g)

11. SUMMARY: (S/NF) On 09/17/08 the Sanaa EAC met to discuss the terrorist attack that took place on the American Embassy at 0915 on 09/17/08. The EAC agreed to request authorized departure. See specific requests in paragraph 8.

12. (S/NF) On 09/17/08 the Ambassador convened the EAC to discuss the terrorist attack on the U.S. Embassy. EAC members in attendance were: AMB, DCM, RSO, POLM, DAO, OMC, FPD, POLE, AID, MO, RMO and CONS.

13. (S/NF) The RSO briefed the EAC on information that had been developed throughout the day. Initial reports show that at approximately 0912 on 09/17/2008, a vehicle containing individuals dressed in military uniforms, identical to the ones worn by host nation security assets assigned to the Embassy, approached the north drop-arm on the exterior of the Embassy LES parking lot. The individuals opened fire, killing host nation security and one LGF assigned to this area. Three assailants then exited the vehicle and opened the drop-arm and entered the parking lot, crashing into a host nation security vehicle and detonating a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED). A second car containing additional assailants approached Gate 1 (the Embassy exit gate) and deployed from the vehicle. It is believed that the second vehicle contained a shape charge intended to breach the Embassy exterior wall. The vehicle detonated, but did not cause the intended damage. The three assailants from the second vehicle were unable to enter the compound after failing to shoot the locks off of the security gates. They each then detonated suicide belts, killing themselves. All six host nation security stationed at the front of the Embassy were killed. Although final numbers are still unknown, it appears that between 13-15 people were killed. This estimate includes one LGF member, the six attackers, and individuals queuing to enter the Consulate. More information will be provided as details become known.

14. (S/NF) The Ambassador informed the EAC that he will meet with senior ROYG security officials as soon as possible to move ahead on previous requests to increase security at the Embassy, including closing the street in front of the Embassy and allowing construction of a new screening area on the service road inside the Embassy exterior parking lot. The RSO will accompany GRPO to meetings with host nation intelligence officials to gather information on the attack. The Legatt is working with the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) crime lab to process the crime scene. The RSO advised that the Embassy will provide copies of the Embassy camera footage to the host nation to aid in its investigation, as part of an ongoing information exchange.

¶15. (S/NF) The RSO briefed the EAC on security arrangements at the Hadda Apartment Complex, where a large number of American diplomats and Western oil company workers live. The RSO stated that a host-nation counter-assault team had been deployed to the complex and security there had been increased. LGF mobile patrols and surveillance detection teams have increased patrols throughout the Hadda District, where the majority of Americans, and will maintain activities on a 24-hour basis. The host nation will increase security by ten additional heavy machine gun trucks and deploy additional host nation armed security to American residences (increasing the number to two) and the Sheraton Hotel, which is housing several TDY personnel. RSO also deployed additional LGF to the Sheraton Hotel to assist with vehicle screening procedures and inspections.

¶16. (S/NF) The EAC agreed to apply restrictions on the use of restaurants, and maintain current restrictions on the use of hotels, other than the Sheraton. All personnel are being asked to maintain a low profile for the weekend and limit movements to essential personal business only. Americans are being allowed to come to work on Saturday on a voluntary basis and limited LES staff are being asked to work. Armored vehicles will be provided for any American and LES staff member for transportation.

¶17. (S/NF) All incoming TDY personnel requests are being reviewed for mission-critical needs. The RSO has requested a DS Mobile Security Division (MSD) team and two Protective Intelligence Investigation (PII) teams be sent to the Embassy to assist the Regional Security Office in the investigation. A two-man Security Engineer Office (SEO) team is currently en route to help assess and repair the damage at the front gates. The Legatt and GRPO have requested individuals to assist the host nation with conducting the investigation.

¶18. (S/NF) ACTION REQUESTS: The EAC requests Authorized Departure for eligible family members and non-essential staff who wish to leave. The Chief of Mission also requests that M delegate to him the authority to determine which personnel currently outside of the country may return, as well as the authority to determine which personnel in-country may leave and return to post. Post believes Authorized Departure is the appropriate step to take at this time because it will permit staff and EFMs to depart Yemen if they so desire without sending the message implicit in Ordered Departure that we have lost confidence in the host government to provide for our security. In fact, the response of the ROYG today was, for the most part, robust and timely. Six members of its security forces died protecting this embassy; its senior security leadership was on site as soon as it was safe for them to come here, and they agreed in a meeting just hours ago to every request we made for enhanced security measures, both here at the Chancery and in the area of our residences. We have seen in recent months a decided upswing in counter-terrorism cooperation, and the ROYG has brought the fight directly to AQY on its own, as evidenced by the successful operation against a dangerous terrorist cell in the Hadramout on August 11. The loss of operational tempo that inevitably comes with Ordered Departure is not/not what this Mission, nor American interests, need at this moment.

¶19. (S/NF) The EAC will continue to monitor all available intelligence and security sources for additional information concerning threats to the Embassy, American and Western communities in Yemen.

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